Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer and
Executive Publisher, *Science*

February 8, 2008

Mr. T. Willard Fair
Chairman, State Board of Education
Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc.
8500 NW 25th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33147

Dear Mr. Fair:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, I write to voice my support for the inclusion of evolution in the final draft of the new science standards for Florida schools, to be considered by the Board of Education on February 19.

The theory of evolution underpins all of modern biology. Although critics claim that it is "just a theory," in fact there is virtually no controversy about evolution among the overwhelming majority of scientists, many of whom are deeply religious. It is supported by tens of thousands of scientific studies in fields that include cosmology, geology, paleontology, genetics and other biological specialties. Evolution informs scientific research in a broad range of fields such as agriculture and medicine, work that impacts our everyday lives.

We applaud the State of Florida for seeking to provide its students with a firm understanding of evolution and other essential scientific concepts, which will help prepare them to compete for high-skill jobs in an increasingly high-tech world economy. I urge you to protect the future of science education in Florida and reject attempts to undermine the teaching of evolution.

AAAS, the world's largest multi-disciplinary science society, representing the interests of ten million scientists worldwide, and publisher of the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Science*, has a longstanding interest and expertise in science education. Our Project 2061, launched in 1985, aims to raise science literacy nationwide, and for the past year has been working with the National School Boards Association to provide school board members with the tools they need to improve science education in their states and local communities. We stand ready to assist you in any way that would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner